

Frequently Asked Questions

Roanoke Region Intermodal Facility

1. Why is DRPT reviewing sites related to this intermodal facility?

DRPT is committed to establishing an intermodal facility as part of the Heartland Corridor Project (Virginia Components), funded through the Rail Enhancement Fund.

As part of DRPT's responsibility to protect the investment of public funds in such a facility, the agency is reviewing site proposals to determine the best possible site location.

2. What is DRPT's role in the facility site location process?

DRPT will identify the best site location for the application of public funds.

3. How were these site proposals selected?

DRPT solicited site proposals from area localities that lie along the rail line within the geographic boundaries of the search area and from Norfolk Southern Railway, the operator for the Heartland Corridor project and the owner of rail tracks in the area.

These proposals had to correspond to a set of baseline criteria established by DRPT to ensure that minimal requirements for the Heartland Corridor project would be met.

Ten proposals were initially received from Norfolk Southern Railway. Subsequently, the City of Salem submitted a modified version of the Colorado St. site. No other proposals were submitted by area localities.

4. What specific criteria were used for the basis of site proposals?

The following criteria apply:

- The proposed intermodal facility must be close to Interstate 81 and allow for reasonably proximate access and egress to the interstate.
- The facility must be located on the Heartland Corridor's rail line between Walton on the western border and the Shenandoah Line Connection on the eastern border. This is necessary in order to ensure a competitive time advantage for freight rail shipments and to maximize the usefulness of this facility to serve the I-81 freight rail corridor.
- The facility must not create the need for additional grade separations, particularly in congested urban areas.

- The facility should be a minimum of 65 acres and of an appropriate configuration and relatively flat in topography.
- To the extent possible, the proposed site should seek to minimize associated roadway costs that might be engendered or necessitated.
- The proposed site should seek to be well-configured from a rail operating perspective to avoid degrading other rail traffic, result in more efficient rail intermodal operation and result in lower relative facility development or facility delivery costs.

5. How are these sites being evaluated?

DRPT is working collectively with applicable state agencies and Norfolk Southern Railway (as the rail operator) to evaluate submitted sites. This initiative includes:

- Initial site proposal review by DRPT for fatal flaws based on the baseline criteria as established by DRPT for Rail Enhancement Funding. (see Question 4 above)
- Information received through public comments during the public comment period
- Site proposal review with respective agencies as determined by DRPT, in coordination with the Office of the Attorney General
- Existing road impact evaluation and road need analysis as conducted by the Virginia Department of Transportation
- Site proposal review for ancillary developable land for future distribution center growth opportunities as conducted by the Virginia Economic Development Partnership
- Site proposal review for practical application and railroad interface as provided by Norfolk Southern Railway

6. When will a decision be announced?

DRPT anticipates making an announcement regarding the application of public funds to the Heartland Corridor Project intermodal facility in winter 2008.